

The Great SA Fallacy

Newcomer comes into the Program: Sees the light. Goes to meetings. Stops acting out. A change takes place, and he or she knows it. Something's different. There's a sense of impending joy. There's recovery in the air, and they get caught up in it. Maybe there's a way out after all! Starts talking the talk.

Same member some time later: Something's wrong. "I still want to look and drink. Sometimes more than ever! I shouldn't be tempted like this. The craving to look or fantasize is so strong! I don't even know I'm doing it." Over time, this awareness may become more acute. The misconception here is, "I'm not supposed to be like this." So we try to shut it out. We try all the harder not to look or fantasize. We try not to have those feelings any more. Confusion sets in. But it's bravely covered over. And we keep on try try trying. . . .

This represents one of the most telling errors or misconceptions in SA; and it's not confined to newcomers: *"Now that I've turned around and am in the program, I shouldn't be tempted with those thoughts and actions I used to be tempted with. My problem should go away now; I should be 'fixed.'"*

This often leaves us with only one conclusion, whether we're aware of it or not: We have to keep trying to fix ourselves. Deadly error!

With our sexaholic load of conditioning and memories, something would be wrong if we *weren't* tempted. Think about it. If I've spent a lifetime burning into my brain and very being the associations of lust, misconnection, or romance—a whole way of looking, thinking, and acting—how can I expect an immediate reversal of that conditioning? That's why true sobriety includes *progressive* victory over these attitudes and behaviors.

It's all right to be tempted. I'm in denial if I think I should be immune to temptation. "I'M A SEXAHOLIC"—that's the watchword of our program. Any other attitude flies in the face of our First Step. What brings us here is admitting we *are* powerless over lust. I've been sober for a considerable time now, but I'm still powerless over lust—my lust and the lust of others. That doesn't mean there's no victory over lust, however. There is!

In early sobriety I labored under this great fallacy, feeling wrong about being tempted with feelings. I was in denial and didn't know it, and I think that contributed to my slip after a year and one-half. Now I know a better way. Actually, it's an easier way. Today, I begin every day by acknowledging to God that I am powerless over lust, that I have no resources against temptation and no power in my own strength to overcome. Today I do what I never would have dreamed of doing earlier (but should have!): As soon as I see that I'm being tempted, I bring Him in immediately. I say, "You know I want to lust after this person right now. You know my heart. Come in and be victorious over my lust." And marvel of marvels, the craving is lifted! While I'm voicing that surrender I may still feel the deprivation

involved, and usually do. But then come perfect release and life. And I didn't have to do it! I didn't deny my feeling, and I didn't try to shut it off or overcome in my own strength. I invited Him in, just as I am.

There's a great difference between wanting to lust and lusting. It's like the difference between wanting to jump off a cliff and actually jumping off. Let's not be afraid of the feelings.

For me, this whole experience is like someone standing at the door and knocking, seeking entrance. If I've got the door barricaded, he's not going to come in. I know of a house, the likes of which I'd never seen before. Over a lifetime, the occupant had accumulated possessions of every sort, so much so that through those huge rooms there was only the narrowest trail through which one had to carefully thread one's way. Mountains of stuff on either side. That large and spacious dwelling had crowded out its owner! All that was left not piled high was one small corner of the kitchen table, where this person spent most of her time.

What am I trying to say? I could not have gotten to the joy of inviting the Master of my house in with every temptation to lust or resentment or fear unless I had unblocked the door and gotten rid of all the junk that stood in His way. And what clears the way for me is working the Steps. That clears out the wreckage of the past and impediments of the present. There's a price to pay—ego-deflation at depth. But what a marvelous gift in return—Life. What freedom and joy are mine every time I invite Him in.

There's something else that encourages me to invite Him in at the very moment of temptation. I've come to know that He loves me *because* I'm tempted. Yes! He knows what I'm going through. This is the wonder of wonders that makes it all possible.

I don't know why so many of us fall into this great fallacy, but it's very common, almost universally so. In a way, I suppose it's natural for us—those who have all our lives tried so hard to be master of our lives—to assume *we* have to do everything. I suppose it goes along with our playing God, too, our ego-lust.

Thank God, even though we've never known this new way before, it's there for each of us to discover in our own time and way. A faith that works.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. . . ."

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